

DEGRADATION
OF
GOLF

Made by an
ANTI-ELIXIR
A STRANGE
Chymical Narativ

by Robert Boyle Esqr.

L O N D O N,

Printed by T.N. for Henry Herringman, at
in the Lower Walk of the New Exch

5013

F

222

ti
le
ti
b
m
m



T H E
PUBLISHER
To the Reader.

HAVING been allowed the Liberty
of Perusing the following Pa-
per at my own Lodging ; I found
my self strongly tempted, by the
Strangeness of the things men-
tion'd in it, to venture to Release it : The know-
ledge I had of the Author's Inclination to Gra-
tifie the Virtuosi, forbidding me to despair of
his pardon, if the same disposition prevail'd
with me, to make the Curious Partakers with
me of so Surprising a Piece of Philosophical
A 2 News.

TO the READER.

News. *And, though it sufficiently appear'd, that the insuing Conference was but a Continuation of a larger Discourse; yet, considering, that this Part consists chiefly, not to say only, of a Narrative; which (if I may so speak) stands upon its own legs, without any need of depending upon any thing that was deliver'd before; I thought it was no great Venture, nor Incongruity, to let it come abroad by it self. And, I the less scrupled to make this Publication, because I found, that the Honorable Mr. Boyle confesses himself to be Fully Satisfied of the Truth, of as much of the Matter of Fact, as delivers the Phœnomena of the Tryal; the Truth whereof was further Confirm'd to me, by the Testimony, and Particular Account, which that most Learned and Experienc'd Physician, who was Assistant to Pyrophilus in making the Experiment, and with whom I have the honor to be Acquainted (being now in London) gave me with his own Mouth, of all the Circumstances of the Tryal. And, where the Truth)*

To the READER.

Truth of that shall be once Granted, there is little cause to doubt, that the Novelty of the thing will sufficiently Indear the Relation: especially to those that are studious of the Higher Arcana of the Hermetick Philosophy. For, most of the Phœnomena here mention'd, will probably seem wholly new, not only to vulgar Chymists, but also to the greatest part of the more knowing Spagyrist, and Natural Philosophers themselves: none of the Orthodox Authors, as far as I can remember, having taken notice of such an Anti-Elixir. And, though Pyrophilus's Scrupulousness (which makes him very unwilling to speak the utmost of a thing) allows it to be a Deterioration into an Imperfect Metall onely; yet, to tell the truth, I think it was more Imbas'd than so; for the part left of it (and kept for some farther Discoveries) which I once got a sight of, looks more like a Mineral, or Marchasite, then like any Imperfect Metall: and therefore this Degradation is not the same, but much greater, than

TO the READER.

than that which Lullius doth intimate in some places. These Considerations make me presume it will easily be granted, That the Effects of this Anti-Philosophers Stone, as I think it may not unfitly be call'd, will not only seem very strange to Hermetick, as well as other Philosophers, but may prove very Instructive to Speculative Wits; especially if Pyrophilus shall please to acquaint them with that more odd Phenomenon, which he Mentions darkly in the Close of his Discourse.

[1]
A N

Historical Account
OF THE
DEGRADATION
OF
G O L D
BY AN
Anti-Elixir.



After the whole Company had, as it were by
Common Consent, continued silent for some
time, which others spent in Reflections up-
on the Preceding *Conference*, and *Pyrophy-*
lus, in the Consideration of what he was
about to Deliver; this *Virtuoso* at length
stood up, and Addressing himself to the rest,
"I hope, *Gentlemen*, says he, that what has been already
Discoursed, has Inclined, if not Perswaded you to Think,
" That

N

[?]
“That the Exaltation, or Change of other *Metals* into *Gold*,
“is not a thing Absolutely Impossible; and, though I con-
“fess, I cannot remove all your Doubts, and Objections, or
“my own, by being able to Affirm to you, That I have with
“my own hands made Projection (as *Chymists* are wont
“to call the Sudden Transmutation made by a small quanti-
“ty of their Admirable *Elixir*) yet I can Confirm much of
“what hath been Argued for the Possibility of such a sudden
“Change of a Metalline Body, by a Way, which, I presume,
“will surprize you. For, to make it more credible, that
“other Metals are capable of being Graduated, or Exalted
“into Gold by way of Projection; I will Relate to you, that
“by the like way, Gold has been Degraded, or Imbased.

The Novelty of this *Preamble* having much surpris'd the
Auditory, at length, *Simplicius*, with a disdainful Smile, told
Pyrophilus, “That the Company would have much thanked
“him, if he could have assured them, That he had seen ano-
“ther Mettal Exalted into Gold; but, that to find a way of
“spoiling Gold, was not onely an Useless Discovery, but a
“Prejudicial Practice.

Pyrophilus was going to make some Return to this *Animad-
version*, when he was prevented by *Aristander*; who, turn-
ing himself to *Simplicius*, told him, with a Countenance and
Tone that argued some displeasure; “If *Pyrophilus* had been
“Discourfing to a Company of Goldsmiths, or of Merchants,
“your severe Reflection upon what he said would have been
“proper: but, you might well have forbore it, if you had
“confidered, as I suppose he did, that he was speaking to an
“Assembly of *Philosophers* and *Virtuosi*, who are wont to esti-
“mate Experiments, not as they enrich Mens Purfes, but their
“Brains, and think Knowledge especially of uncommon
“things very desirable, even when 'tis not accompanied
“with any other thing, than the Light that still attends it,
“and indears it. It hath been thought an Useful Secret, by

" a kind of Retrogradation to turn Tin and Lead into brit-
 " tle Bodies, like the Ores of those Metals. And if I thought
 " it proper, I could shew, that such a change might be of use
 " in the Investigation of the Nature of those Metals, besides
 " the practical use that I know may be made of it. To find
 " the Nature of Wine, we are assisted, not only by the me-
 " thods of obtaining from it a Spirit; but by the ways of
 " readily turning it into Vinegar: the knowledge of which
 " ways hath not been despised by Chymists or Physicians,
 " and hath at *Paris*, and divers other places, set up a profit-
 " able Trade. 'Tis well known that divers eminent *Spagy-*
 " *rists* have reckon'd amongst their highest *Arcana* the ways
 " by which they pretended, (and I fear did but pretend) to
 " Extract the Mercury of Gold, and consequently *destroy*
 " that Metal; and 'twere not hard to shew by particular in-
 " stances, that all the Experiments wherein Bodies are in
 " some respects deteriorated, are not without distinction to
 " be rejected or despis'd; since in some of them, the Light
 " they may afford may more than countervail the Degrada-
 " tion of a small quantity of matter, though it be Gold it
 " self. And indeed, (continues he) if we will consider
 " things as Philosophers, and look upon them as Nature
 " hath made them, not as Opinion hath disguised them; the
 " Prerogatives and usefulness of Gold, in comparison of
 " other Metals, is nothing near so great as Alchymists and
 " Usurers imagine. For, as it is true, that Gold is more
 " ponderous, and more fix'd, and perhaps more difficult to
 " be spoiled, than Iron; yet these qualities (whereof the
 " first makes it burthenfom, and the two others serve chiefly
 " but to distinguish the true from counterfeit) are so balan-
 " ced by the hardness, stiffness, springiness, and other use-
 " ful qualities of Iron; that if those two Metals I speak of,
 " (Gold and Iron) were equally plentiful in the World, it
 " is scarce to be doubted, but that Men would prefer the

" more useful before the more splendid, considering how
 " much worse it were for Mankind to want Hatchets, and
 " Knives and Swords, than Coin and Plate? Wherefore,
 " (concludes he) I think *Pyrophilus* ought to be both desi-
 " red and encouraged to go on with his intended Discourse,
 " since whether Gold be or not be the Best of Metals; an affu-
 " rance that it may be degraded, may prove a Novelty very
 " Instructive, and perhaps more so than the Transmutation
 " of a baser Metal into a Nobler. For I remember it hath
 " long pass'd for a Maxim among Chymical Philosophers,
 " That *Facilius est aurum construere quam destruere*: And
 " whatever becomes of that, 'tis certain that Gold being
 " the closest, the constantest, and the least destructible of
 " Metals, to be able to work a notable and almost *Essential*
 " change in such a Body, (though, by detereorating it) is
 " more than to work a *like change*, (though in popular esti-
 " mation for the better) in any Metal less indisposed to ad-
 " mit alterations, especially in such an one as *Pyrophilus* inti-
 " mates, by telling us, that 'twas made by *Way of Projection*,
 " and consequently by a very small proportion of active
 " matter; whereas the destructions that vulgar Chymists
 " pretend to make of Gold, are wont to be attempted to
 " be made by considerable proportions of Corrosive *Men-*
 " *struums*, or other fretting Bodies; and even these, Expe-
 " rience shews to be usually too weak to *ruine*, though some
 " times they may much *disguise* the most Stable Texture of
 " Gold. *Cuncta adeo miris illic complexibus herent.*

Pyrophilus perceiving by several signs that he needed not ad-
 any thing of Apologetical to what *Arrifander* had already
 said for him, resumed his Discourse, by saying, "I was go-
 " ing, Gentlemen, when *Simplicius* diverted me, to tell you
 " That looking upon the Vulgar Objections that have been
 " wont to be fram'd against the possibility of Metalline
 " Transmutations, from the Authority and Prejudices of

" *Aristotle*

“ *Aristotle*, and the School-Philosophers, as Arguments that
 “ in such an Assembly as this need not now be solemnly
 “ discuss’d; I consider that the *difficulties* that really de-
 “ serve to be call’d so, and are of weight even with Mecha-
 “ nical Philosophers, and Judicious Naturalists, are princi-
 “ pally these. *First*, That the great change that must be
 “ wrought by the *Elixir*, (if there be such an Agent) is
 “ effected upon Bodies of so stable and almost immutable a
 “ Nature as Metals. *Next*, That this great change is said
 “ to be brought to pass in a very short time. *And thirdly*,
 “ (which is yet more strange) That this great and suddain
 “ alteration is said to be effected by a very small, and per-
 “ haps inconsiderable, proportion of the transmuting Pow-
 “ der. To which *three* grand difficulties, I shall add *ano-*
 “ *ther* that to me appears, and perhaps will seem to divers
 “ of the new Philosophers, worthy to be lookt upon as a
 “ *fourth*, namely, The notable change that must by a real
 “ transmutation be made in the Specifick Gravity of the
 “ matter wrought upon: which difficulty I therefore think
 “ not unworthy to be added to the rest, because upon sever-
 “ al tryals of my own and other men, I have found no
 “ known quality of Gold, (as its colour, malleableness, fixi-
 “ ty, or the like) so difficult, if not so impossible, to be in-
 “ troduc’d into any other Metalline Matter, as the great
 “ Specifick Gravity that is peculiar to Gold. So that, Gen-
 “ tlemen, (concludes *Pyrophilus*) if it can be made appear
 “ that Art has produc’d an *Anti-Elixir*, (if I may so call it) or
 “ Agent that is able in a very short time, to work a very no-
 “ table, though deteriorating, change upon a Metal; in
 “ proportion to which, its quantity is very inconsiderable;
 “ I see not why it should be thought impossible that Art may
 “ also make a *true Elixir*, or Powder capable of speedily
 “ Transmuting a great proportion of a baser Metal into Sil-
 “ ver or Gold: especially if it be considered, that those

“that treat of these *Arcana*, confess that 'tis not every matter which may be justly called the Philosophers Stone, that is able to transmute other Metals in vast quantities; since several of these Writers, (and even *Lully* himself) make differing orders or degrees of the *Elixir*, and acknowledge, that a Medicine or Tincture of the first or lowest order will not transmute above ten times its weight of an Inferior Metal.

Pyrophilus having at this part of his Discourse made a short pause to take breath, *Crattippus* took occasion from his silence to say to him, “I presume, *Pyrophilus*, I shall be disavowed by very few of these Gentlemen, if I tell you that the company is impatient to hear the Narrative of your Experiment, and that if it do so much as probably make out the particulars you have been mentioning, you will in likelihood persuade most of them, and will certainly oblige them all. I shall therefore on their behalf as well as my own, sollicite you to hasten to the Historical part of a Discourse that is so like to gratifie our Curiosity.

The Company having by their unanimous silence, testified their approbation of what *Crattippus* had said; and appearing more than ordinarily attentive,

As I was one day abroad, saith *Pyrophilus*, to return visits to my Friends, I was by a happy Providence (for it was beside my first Intention) directed to make one to an Ingenious Foreigner, with whom a few that I had received from him, had given me some little acquaintance.

Whilst this Gentleman and I were discoursing together of several matters, there came in to visit him a stranger, whom I had but once seen before; and though that were in a promiscuous company, yet he addressed himself to me in a way that quickly satisfied me of the greatness of his Civility; which he soon after also did of that of his Curiosity.

sity. For the *Virtuoso*, in whose Lodgings we met; having (to gratifie me) put him upon the discourse of his Voyages; the curious stranger entertained us an hour or two with pertinent and judicious Answers to the Questions I askt him about places so remote, or so much within Land, that I had not met with any of our English Navigators or Travellers that had penetrated so far as to visit them. And because I found by his discourse that I was like to enjoy such good company but a very little while, (since he told me that he came the other day into *England* but to dispatch a business which he had already done as far as he could do it, after which he was with speed to return, as (to my trouble) he did to his Patron that sent him) I made the more haste to propose such Questions to him, as I most desired to be satisfied about; and among other things, enquiring whether in the Eastern parts he had travers'd, he had met with any Chymists; he answered me that he had; and that though they were *fewer*, and more *reserved* than ours, yet he did not find them all less *skilful*. And on this occasion, before he left the Town to go aboard the Ship he was to overtake; he in a very obliging way put into my hands at parting a little piece of Paper, folded up; which he said contained all that he had left of a rarity he had received from an Eastern *Virtuoso*, and which he intimated would give me occasion both to Remember him, and to exercise my thoughts in uncommon Speculations.

The great delight I took in conversing with a Person that had travelled so far; and could give me so good an account of what he had seen, made me so much resent the being so soon deprived of it, that though I judg'd such a *Virtuoso* would not, as a great token of his kindness, have presented me a trifle, yet the Present did but very imperfectly console me for the loss of so pleasing and instructive a Conversation.

Never-

Nevertheless, that I might comply with the curiosity he himself had excited in me, and know how much I was his Debtor, I resolv'd to see what it was he had given me, and try whether I could make it do what I thought he *Intimated*, by the help of those few *hints* rather than *directions* how to use it, which the parting haste he was in (or perhaps some other reason best known to himself) confin'd him to give me. But in regard that I could not but think the Experiment would one way or other prove Extraordinary, I thought fit to take a Witness or two and an Assistant in the trying of it; and for that purpose made choice of an experienced Doctor of Physick, very well vers'd in the separating and copelling of Metals.

Though the Company (says *Heliodorus*) be so confident of your sincerity and wariness, that they would give credit even to unlikely Experiments, upon your single testimony; yet we cannot but approve your discretion in taking an Assistant and a Witness, because in nice and uncommon Experiments we can scarce use too much circumspection, especially when we have not the means of reiterating the tryal: for in such new, as well as difficult cases, 'tis easie even for a clear-sighted Experimenter to over-look some important circumstance, that a far less skilful by-stander may take notice of.

As I have ever judg'd, (saith *Pyrophilus*) that cautiousness is a very requisite qualification for him that would satisfactorily make curious Experiments; so I thought fit to employ a more than ordinary measure of it, in making a tryal, whose event I imagin'd might prove odd enough. And therefore having several times observ'd that some men are prepossessed, by having a particular Expectation rais'd in them, and are inclin'd to think that they *do see* that happen which they think they *should* see happen; I resolv'd to obviate this prejudication as much as innocently I could,
and

and (without telling him any thing but the *truth*, to which Philosophy as well as Religion obliges us to be strictly loyal) I told him but thus much of the truth, that I expected that a small proportion of a Powder presented me by a Foreign *Virtuoso*, would give a Brittleness to the most flexible and malleable of Metals, Gold it self. Which change I perceiv'd he judg'd so considerable and unlikely to be effected, that he was greedy of seeing it severely try'd.

Having thus prepared him not to look for all that I my self expected, I cautiously opened the Paper I lately mentioned, but was both surprized and troubled, (as he also was) to find in it so very little Powder, that in stead of two differing tryals that I designed to make with it, there seem'd very small hope left that it would serve for one, (and that but an imperfect one neither.) For there was so very little Powder, that we could scarce see the colour of it, (save that as far as I could judge it was of a darkish Red) and we thought it not only dangerous, but useless to attempt to weigh it, in regard we might easily lose it by putting it into, and out of the Balance; and the Weights we had were not small enough for so despicable a quantity of matter, which in words I estimated at an eighth part of a Grain: but my Assistant, (whose conjecture I confess my thoughts inclin'd to prefer) would allow it to be at most but a tenth part of a Grain. Wherefore seeing the utmost we could reasonably hope to do with so very little Powder, was to make *one* tryal with it, we weigh'd out in differing Balances two Drams of Gold that had been formerly English Coyn, and that I caus'd by one that I usually imploy to be *cupell'd* with a sufficient quantity of Lead, and *quartered*, as they speak, with refin'd Silver, and purg'd *Aqua fortis*, to be sure of the goodness of the Gold: these two Drams I put into a new Crucible, first carefully Neal'd, and having brought them to fusion by the meer action of the fire, without

out the help of Borax, or any other Additament, (which course, though somewhat more laborious, than the most usual we took to obviate scruples) I put into the well-melted Metal with my own hand the little parcel of Powder lately mentioned, and continuing the Vessel in the fire for about a quarter of an hour, that the Powder might have time to defuse it self every way into the Metal, we poured out the well-melted Gold into another Crucible that I had brought with me, and that had been gradually heated before, to prevent cracking. But though from the first fusion of the Metal, to the pouring out, it had turn'd in the Crucible like ordinary Gold, save that once my Assistant told me he saw that for two or three moments it lookt almost like an Opale; yet I was somewhat surpriz'd to find when the matter was grown cold, that though it appear'd upon the Balance that we had not lost any thing of the weight we put in, yet in stead of *fine Gold*, we had a lump of Metal of a dirty colour, and as it were overcast with a thin coat, almost like *half vitrified Litharge*; and somewhat to increase the wonder, we perceived that there stuck to one side of the Crucible a little Globule of Metal that lookt not at all yellowish, but like course Silver, and the bottom of the Crucible was overlaid with a vitrified substance, whereof one part was of a transparent yellow, and the other of a deep brown, inclining to red; and in this vitrified substance I could plainly perceive sticking at least five or six little Globules that lookt more like impure Silver than pure Gold. In short, this *stuff* lookt so little like *refn'd*, or so much as *ordinary Gold*, that though my Friend did much more than I marvel at this change, yet I confess I was surpriz'd at it my self. For though in some particulars it answered what I lookt for, yet in others, it was very differing from that which the Donor of the Powder had, as I thought, given me ground to expect. Whether the cause of my disappointment

pointment were that (as I formerly intimated) this *Virtuoso's* haste or design made him leave me in the dark ; or whether it were that finding my self in want of sufficient directions, I happily pitch't upon such a proportion of Materials, and way of operating, as were proper to make a new Discovery, which the excellent Giver of the Powder had not Design'd, or perhaps thought of.

I shall not at all wonder, saith *Cratippus*, either at your Friends amazement, or at your surprize, if your further tryals did in any measure confirm what the *superficial change* that appeared in your Metal could not but incline you to conjecture.

You will best judge of that (replies *Pyrophilus*) by the account I was going to give you of what we did with our odd Metal. *And First*, having rubb'd it upon a good Touchstone, whereon we had likewise rubb'd a piece of *Coynd Silver*, and a piece of *Coynd Gold*, we manifestly found that the mark left upon the Stone by our Mass between the marks of the two other Metals, was notoriously more like the Touch of the Silver than to that of the Gold. *Next*, having knockt our little lump with a Hammer, it was, (according to my prediction) found brittle, and flew into several pieces. *Thirdly*, (which is more) even the insides of those pieces lookt of a base dirty colour, like that of Brass or worse, for the *fragments* had a far greater resemblance to *Bell-Metal*, than either to Gold or to Silver. To which we added this *fourth*, and more considerable, Examination; that having carefully weigh'd out one dram of our stuff, (reserving the rest for trials to be suggested by *second thoughts*) and put it upon an excellent new and well-neal'd Cupel, with about half a dozen times its weight of Lead, we found, somewhat to our wonder, that though it turn'd very well like good Gold, yet it continued in the fire above an hour and an half, (which was twice as long as we expected) and yet almost

almost to the very last the fumes copiously ascended, which sufficiently argu'd the operation to have been well carried on; and when at last it was quite ended, we found the Cupel very smooth and intire, but ting'd with a fine Purplish Red, (which did somewhat surprize us) and besides, the *refined Gold*, there lay upon the cavity of the Cupel some dark-coloured recrements, which we concluded to have proceeded from the deteriorated Metal, not from the Lead. But when we came to put our Gold again into the Balance, we found it to weigh only about *fifty three Grains*, and consequently to have lost *seven*; which yet we found to be fully made up by that little quantity of recrements that I have lately mention'd, whose Weight and Fixity, compared with their unpromising Colour, did not a little puzzle us, especially because we had not enough either of Them, or of leisure, to examine their nature. To all which circumstances, I shall subjoin this, that to prevent any scruples that might arise touching the *Gold* we imploy'd, I caused a dram and a half that had been purposely reserv'd out of the same portion with that that had been debas'd; I caused this (I say) to be in my Assistants presence melted by it self, and found it (as I doubted not but I should do) fine and well-coloured Gold.

I hope you will pardon my curiosity, saith *Arristander* to the Gentleman that spoke last, if I ask why you take no notice of the effect of *Aqua fortis* upon your *imbas'd Metal*? Your Question, replies *Pyrophilus*, I confess to be very reasonable, and I am somewhat troubled that I can answer it but by telling you that we had not at hand any *Aqua fortis* we durst relie on; which yet I was the less troubled at, because heretofore some *tryals* purposely made had inform'd me, that in some *Metalline Mixtures* the *Gold* if it were much predominant in quantity, may protect another Metal; (for instance *Silver*) from being dissolved by that *Menstruum*, though not from being at all invaded by it.

There

There yet remain'd, saith *Heliodorus*, one examen more of your odd Metal, which would have satisfied me, at least as much as any of the rest, of its having been notably imbas'd: for if it were altered in its *specifick gravity*, that quality I have always observ'd (as I lately perceiv'd you also have done) to stick so close to Gold, that it could not by an additament so inconsiderable in point of bulk, be considerably altered without a notable and almost Essential change in the texture of the Metal.

To this pertinent discourse, *Pyrophilus*, with the respect due to a person that so worthily sustain'd the dignity he had of presiding in that *choice company*, made this return: I owe you, Sir, my humble thanks for calling upon me to give you an account I might have forgotten, and which is yet of so important a thing, that none of the other *Phænomena* of our Experiment seem'd to me to deserve so much notice. Wherefore I shall now inform you, that having provided my self of all the requisites to make Hydrostatical Tryals, (to which perhaps I am not altogether a stranger) I carefully weighed in water the *ill-lookt* Mass, (before it was divided for the coupelling of the above-mentioned dram) and found, to the great confirmation of my former *wonder* and *conjectures*, that in stead of weighing about nineteen times as much as a bulk of water, equal to it, its proportion to that liquor was but that of fifteen, and about two thirds to one: so that its *specifick gravity* was less by about $\frac{1}{3}$; than if it had been pure Gold it would have been.

At the recital of this *notable circumstance*, superadded to the rest, the generality of the Company, and the President too, by looking and smiling upon one another, express'd themselves to be as *well delighted* as *surpriz'd*; and after the murmuring occasion'd by the various whispers that pass'd amongst them, was a little over, *Heliodorus* address'd himself to *Pyrophilus*, and told him, I need not, and therefore shall

not, stay for an exprefs order from the Company to give you their hearty thanks : for as the *Obliging Stranger* did very much gratifie you by the Present of his *Wonderful Powder*, so you have not a little gratified us by so candid and particular a Narrative of the effects of it ; and I hope (continues he) that if you have not yet otherwise dispos'd of that part of your *deteriorated Gold* that you did not cupel, you will sometime or other favour us with a sight of it.

I join in this request, said *Crattippus*, as soon as he perceived the President had done speaking, and to facilitate the grant of it, I shall not scruple to tell *Pyrophilus* he may be confident that the *Degradation* of his *Gold* will not depreciate it amongst Us : since if it be allowable for Opinion to stamp such a value upon *Old Coyns* and *Medals*, that in the Judgment of good Antiquaries, a rusty piece of *Brass* or *Copper*, with a half defaced Image or Inscription on it, is to be highlier valued than as big a piece of well-stamp'd *Gold* ; I see not why it should not be lawful for Philosophers to prize such a lump of *depraved Gold* as yours, before the *finest Gold* the Chymists or Mintmasters are wont to afford us. And though I freely grant that some old *Copper Medals* are of good use in History, to keep alive by their *Inscriptions* the memory of the taking of a Town, or the winning of a Battel; though these be but things that almost every day are some where or other done, yet I think *Pyrophilus's* imbas'd Metal is much to be preferr'd, as not only preserving the memory, but being an effect of such a Victory of Art over Nature, and the conquering of such generally believ'd insuperable difficulties, as no Story that I know of gives us an example of.

As soon as ever *Crattippus* had made a pause, *Pyrophilus* to prevent complimental discourse, did in few words tell the President, That his part had been but that of a Relator of matter of Fact, and that therefore he could deserve but
little

little thanks and no praise at all ; though a good measure of both of them were due to the *Obliging Virtuoso* that had given him the Powder ; and in that, the opportunity of complying with his duty, and his inclination, to serve that learned Company.

These Gentlemen (saith *Arristander*) are not persons among whom modesty is either *restrained* from expressing it self, or *construed* according to the Letter ; and therefore whatever you have been pleas'd to say, the Company cannot but think its self much oblig'd to you ; and I know the obligation would be much increas'd, if you would favor us with your reflections upon the extraordinary Experiment you have been pleas'd to relate to us.

If, replies *Pyrophilus*, I had had wherewithal to repeat the Experiment, and vary it according to the hints afforded me by the first tryal, I should be less unfit to comply with *Arristander's* motion: but the *Phænomena* are too new and too difficult for me to attempt to unriddle them by the help of so slender an *information* as a person so little sagacious as I could get by a *single tryal* ; and though I will not deny that I have had some raving thoughts about this puzzling subject, yet I hope I shall easily be pardon'd, if I decline to present crude and *immature* thoughts to a Company that so well *deserves* the most *ripe* ones, and can so skilfully *discover* those that are not so.

I confess, saith *Heliodorus*, that I think *Pyrophilus's* wariness deserves not only to be *allow'd*, but *imitated* ; and therefore by my consent the further discourse of so abstruse a subject, shall be deferr'd till we shall have had time to consider seriously of *Phænomena* that will be sure to *employ* our most speculative thoughts, and I fear to *pose* them too : only we must not forget that *Pyrophilus himself* ought to be not barely *allow'd*, but *invited* to draw before we rise, what Corrollaries he thinks fit to propose from what he hath already delivered.

The

The inference, saith *Pyrophilus*, I meant to make, will not detain you long; having for the main been already intimated in what you may remember I told you I design'd in the mention I was about to make of the now-recited Experiment. For without launching into difficult Speculations, or making use of disputable Hypotheses, it seems evident enough from the matter of Fact faithfully laid before you, that an Operation *very near*, if not *altogether* as strange as that which is call'd Projection, and in the difficultest points much of the same nature with it, may safely be admitted. For our Experiment plainly shews that Gold, though confessedly the most homogeneous, and the least mutable of Metals, may be in a very short time (perhaps not amounting to many minutes) exceedingly *chang'd*, both as to *malleableness*, *colour*, *homogeniety*, and (which is more) *specifick gravity*; and all this by so very inconsiderable a proportion of injected Powder, that since the Gold that was wrought on weigh'd two of our English drams, and consequently an hundred and twenty grains, an easie computation will assure us that the Medicine did thus powerfully act, according to my estimate, (which was the modestest) upon near a thousand times, (for 'twas above nine hundred and fifty times) its weight of Gold, and according to my Assistants estimate, did (as they speak) *go on* upon twelve hundred; so that if it were fit to apply to this *Anti-Elixir*, (as I formerly ventur'd to call it) what is said of the true *Elixir* by divers of the Chymical Philosophers, who will have the virtue of their Stone increas'd in such a proportion, as that at first 'twill transmute but *ten* times its weight; after the next rotation *an hundred* times, and after the next to that *a thousand times*, our Powder may in their language be stil'd *a Medicine of the third order*.

The Computation, saith *Arristander*, is very obvious, but the change of so great a proportion of Metal is so wonderful and unexampled, that I hope we shall among other things learn

learn from it this lesson, That we ought not to be so forward as many men otherwise of great parts are wont to be, in prescribing narrow limits to the power of Nature and Art, and in condemning and deriding all those that pretend to, or believe, uncommon things in Chymistry, as either (heats or Credulous. And therefore I hope, that though (at least in my opinion) it be very allowable to call Fables, Fables, and to detect and expose the Impostures or Deceits of ignorant or vain-glorious Pretenders to Chymical Mysteries, yet we shall not by too hasty and general censures of the sober and diligent Indicators of the *Arcana* of Chymistry, blemish (as much as in us lies) that excellent Art it self, and thereby disoblige the genuine Sons of it, and divert those that are indeed Possessors of Noble Secrets, from vouchsafing to gratifie *our* Curiosity, as we see that one of them did *Pyrophilus's*, with the sight at least, of some of their highly Instructive Rarities.

I wholly approve, saith *Heliodorus* rising from his seat, the discreet and seasonable motion made by *Arristander*.

And I presume, subjoins *Pyrophilus*, that it will not be the less lik'd, if I add, That I will allow the Company to believe that as *extraordinary*, as I perceive most of you think the *Phænomena* of the lately recited Experiment; yet I have not (because I must not do it) as yet acquainted you with the Strangest effect of our Admirable Powder.

